

Australia Features Six Native Animals

On January 13 Australia Post issued a set of Native Animals stamps that feature five Australian marsupials and one monotreme that are popular with locals and tourists.

Monotremes are mammals that lay eggs instead of giving birth to live young. The monotreme featured in this issue—the Short-beaked Echidna—feeds largely on ants and termites and is found throughout Australia. The only other monotreme is the Platypus.

The stocky Common Wombat is found in the cooler and better watered parts of southern and eastern Australia, including Tasmania, and in mountain districts as far north as the south of Queensland, but is declining in Western Victoria and South Australia.

The Eastern grey kangaroo is the second largest and heaviest living marsupial and native land mammal in Australia. An adult male will commonly weigh around 110 to 145 pounds and can be more than six feet tall.

The Koala lives in eucalyptus forests along the eastern seaboard. It is easily recognizable by its stout, tailless body; round, fluffy ears; and large, spoon-shaped nose. Because this eucalypt diet has limited

nutritional and caloric content, they are largely sedentary and sleep for up to 20 hours a day.

The Numbat is a small, striped marsupial confined in the wild to the south-west of Western Australia. Its diet consists almost exclusively of termites. Once widespread across southern Australia, its range is now restricted to several small colonies, and it is listed as an endangered species. The numbat is an emblem of Western Australia and protected by conservation programs.

The Tasmanian Devil is a carnivorous marsupial, now found in the wild only on the Australian island state of Tasmania. The size of a small dog, it is the largest carnivorous marsupial in the world, and is characterized by its stocky and muscular build, black fur, pungent odor, extremely loud and disturbing screech, keen sense of smell, and ferocity when feeding.

The stamps and related products were designed by Sharon Rodziewicz of the Australia Post Design Studio. The stamps were printed using a multicolor lithography process.

Other products associated with this stamp issue include a first day cover, stamp pack, set of maxicards, booklets of 10 and 20 stamps, stamp pack and a presentation pack that includes an exclusive perforated sheetlet.

The new Australia Native Animals issue is available at www.auspost.com.au/stamps or contact Australia Stamp Agency in North America toll free (USA and Canada) at 1-800-443-4225 while stocks last.

